

NEWS RELEASE:

January 9, 1968

Colonel David B. Kelly, Superintendent
New Jersey State Police
Trenton, New Jersey

Dear Colonel Kelly:

I am amazed at your statement of Sunday January 7, 1968 regarding the activities of the State Police during the disturbance of July 1967.

You state; "There was no need to take disciplinary action. We found nothing to substantiate the charges."

This remark is an affront and insult to the intelligence of the citizens of the City of Newark. In view of documented evidence turned over to your investigation by our Commission you do irreparable harm to your status as our State Police Superintendent when you attempt to white wash and push under a rug the tragic events that involved many of your State Police actions towards Newark citizens.

Do you infer by your remarks that the several dozen residents of Beacon Street are lying when they state in petition that they were eye-witnesses to State Police

actions on July 14, 1967 at 5:30 p.m. at which time without warning or provocation sprayed the street from left to right near Springfield Avenue, shot James Sneed, age 36 in the stomach as he was making repairs on his car. Earl Green, age 17 was shot in the head as he stood on his sister's porch at Beacon Street?

Are you saying that John Thomas, local educator, founder of Crispus Attucks Day, is lying when he was searched and beaten then released by the State Police at Watson and Bergen Street?

Do you infer that Mrs. Halsey McGuire of 300 Hunterdon Street is lying when she observed the State Police kicking down the doors, shot up a third floor apartment including furniture? Where women were taken out of the house and told to lie on the ground in front of the house and the thirteen year old son of Reverend Leverett, a neighbor, came out of his house and the State Police cut his pants off?

Is Mrs. Lewis, # 2 Stratford Place, whose furniture was shot up by State Police lying about this incident?

Did not the death of James W. Rutledge Jr. at Jo-Rae's Music Room at Bergen and Custer Street have savage and sadistic overtones? The Perry Funeral Home counted thirty nine rifle wounds as they prepared the body for burial.

The following are just a few of the victims of the irresponsible action of the State Police. The State Police merely shot up their business establishments and broke windows.

1. Back Room Tavern, 132 Orchard St.
2. Confectionary Store, Jelester Richardson, 799 South 18th St.
3. King-Nex Cleaners and Dyers, 473 Avon Ave.
4. Steve Thomas, Insurance Broker, 580 Clinton Ave.

5. Cecil Hewitt, Insurance Broker, 372 Clinton Ave.
6. Callender Real Estate, 568 Springfield Ave.
7. Eddis Hasty, Dress Shop, 570 Clinton Ave.
8. Nancy Ferguson, Furniture and Appliances, 997 Bergen St., (She was in the store).
9. 439 Club, 439-15th Ave.
10. Earl Harris, Restaurant, Elizabeth Ave.

As the head of our State Police your irresponsible statement will only increase the polarization that presently exists between The Negro Community and Our Law Enforcement Agencies.

Governor Hughes stated a few months ago at the Operation Combine for Civil Disturbance at Trenton State College

"Most police are doing a good job, but some police are racists and have a personal dislike for Negroes". "Police brutality is caused by a few bad apples...."

This substantial minority was supposed to represent law and order yet their racism was brought out vividly and tragically during the riot or rebellion.

It is important for you to note, Colonel Kelly, that all law abiding citizens fear the crime that lurks in dark streets, highways and shadowed doorways, but there is something wrong when a large percentage of our citizens fear the police and your statement certainly will not reduce this fear.

It must be recognized that the rights of every citizen black or white in Newark are threatened when the rights of one are abused, are not Newark citizens justified in feeling that we'll never have tranquility in our streets until all

our law enforcement representatives carry out their duties with respect for the law, the rights of individuals and the occasional agencies of the human condition.

It must be recognized that the policeman on the corner and the State policeman on the highway have one power greater than any power delegated to the President of the United States. They can take away a citizens liberty.

The actions of this minority of State Police during the July disturbances left many wounds amongst thousands of Newark's citizens and your statement will not hasten the healing of these wounds.

Your denial of any misconduct on the part of the State Police reflects a blindness to justice so severe that the only result will be the creation of additional tensions in the minds of Newark's citizens whose only hope is to be treated like 1st. class citizens.

Sincerely yours,

Albert Black

ALBERT BLACK
CHAIRMAN

AB/jh

Newark Human Rights Commission